

Appln. No. 10/721,086

Atty. Docket No. T3844-8802US01
XA-9985

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, as amended.

Applicants have noted that Japanese Reference 3-191450 listed on the PTO-1449 was not considered. Even though a full translation was not provided, Applicants respectfully request the reference be considered to the extent that its relevance was discussed in the specification.

Without concession as to the propriety of the outstanding rejections, the issues raised under 35 U.S.C. § 112 have been addressed and certain claims amended to recite more specific features of the invention.

Amended Independent Claim 1 recites that when the information processing section detects an error state associated with an area in the semiconductor memory, it substitutes the area during an idle state (where operations are not being performed in response to outside commands) when the error state is indicated to be a critical state, and substitutes the area immediately when the error state is indicated to be a limit state.

None of the cited references to Hosono, Harari, and Schwarz teaches or suggests this feature. In contrast, Hosono teaches that the nonvolatile memory performs the data programming immediately in accordance with the program

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command. In Harari, "defective cells or defective sectors [are] remapped as soon as they are detected thereby enabling error correction codes to adequately rectify the relatively few errors that may crop up in the system." See Col. 2, lines 34-42.

In that Schwarz fails to overcome the deficiencies Hosono and Harari, the claims are patentably distinguishable from the cited references.

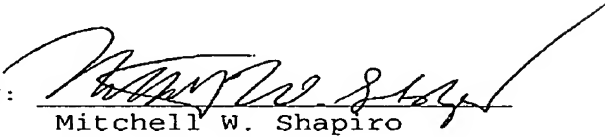
An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (T3844-8802US01) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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